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SCIENCE

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REMINISCENCES OF THE WOODS HOLE LABORATORY OF THE BUREAU OF FISHERIES, 1882-89¹

ON February 9, 1871, a law was passed by Congress which directed the President to appoint a man of approved scientific and practical knowledge of fish and fisheries, to be chosen from among the civil officers of the government, who was to serve as U. S. Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries without additional salary.

This act virtually defined Spencer F. Baird, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, who thereupon was appointed commissioner by the President. The commissioner was clothed with unusual powers; for the act instructed the heads of the various executive departments to render the commissioner such assistance as might lie in their power. Frequent acknowledgments of the cooperation of the departments of the treasury, war, interior and navy are found in the earlier reports of the Fish Commission.

The immediate problem before the commissioner was: An inquiry into the decrease of food fishes. It is interesting to note that Professor Baird chose Woods Hole as the place for beginning research on this problem. That was in the summer of 1871. Those associated with him were Professors A. E. Verrill, Theodore N. Gill and Sydney I. Smith.

The headquarters in 1872 were at Eastport, Maine; in 1873 at Portland, Maine; in 1874 at Noank, Connecticut; in 1875 again at Woods Hole. During the year

¹ MSS. intended for publication and books, etc., intended for review should be sent to Professor J. McKeen Cattell, Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

¹ A lecture delivered before the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, Mass., August 7, 1914.